

REMARKS

In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Office Action.

Claims 1, 4, 6-9, 19, 20, and 24 are now pending in the application. Each of these claims has been allowed. Claim 6 has been amended herein to more clearly define the invention. No new matter has been added.

On December 29, 2003, this application was withdrawn from issuance, and a Request for Continued Examination was filed, seeking consideration of an Information Disclosure Statement citing references from a search conducted by a foreign patent office in connection with a corresponding application. Of those references, the foreign patent office cited EP-735742-A2 (the '742 reference) as being "particularly relevant if taken alone." Applicants submit the following remarks with regard to that reference.

As recited in claim 1, the present invention is directed to an optical scanning apparatus. Among other features, sagittal deformation surfaces comprise two or more surfaces in which the curvatures in the sagittal direction at respective positions in a meridional direction increase or decrease on a same side.

Applicant submits that the '742 reference does not include at least these features. For example, as shown in Figure 16, a shape in a sagittal direction of an incident surface of a first imaging lens 30a is shown. A curvature in the sagittal direction of one of the left or right side is not larger than a curvature in the sagittal direction of the other. The curvature of a first side, in the sagittal direction at respective positions in the meridional direction, is

sometimes larger than the other, while the curvature of the other side is sometimes larger than that on the first side.

In Figure 24, a shape in a sagittal direction of an emerged surface of the first imaging lens 30a is shown, in Figure 32, a shape in a sagittal direction of an incident surface of a second imaging lens is shown, and in Figure 40, a shape in a sagittal direction of an emerged surface of the second imaging lens 30b is shown. In each of these figures, the curvature of one side, in the sagittal direction at respective positions in the meridional direction, is sometimes larger than the other side. Moreover, in Figures 24 and 40, the curvature of the other side is sometimes larger than that on the one side. As such, Applicant believes that the '742 reference fails to teach or suggest at least that sagittal deformation surfaces comprise two or more surfaces in which the curvatures in the sagittal direction at respective positions in a meridional direction increase or decrease on a same side, as recited in independent claim 1.

In another aspect of the present invention, claim 6 recites, among other features, scanning optical means including a plurality of $f\theta$ lenses, an $f\theta$ lens located closest to the deflecting means among said plurality of $f\theta$ lenses has a negative refractive power in the sagittal direction, and an $f\theta$ lens located closest to the surface to be scanned, among said plurality of $f\theta$ lenses, has a positive refractive power in the sagittal direction.

Applicant submits that the '742 reference does not include at least these features. According to Applicant's understanding, the '742 reference teaches a first imaging lens 30a and a second imaging lens 30b, both having positive powers in the sagittal direction. As such, Applicant believes that the '742 reference fails to teach or suggest at least that scanning optical means including a plurality of $f\theta$ lenses, an $f\theta$ lens located closest to the deflecting means

among said plurality of $f\theta$ lenses has a negative refractive power in the sagittal direction, and an $f\theta$ lens located closest to the surface to be scanned, among said plurality of $f\theta$ lenses, has a positive refractive power in the sagittal direction, as recited in independent claim 6.

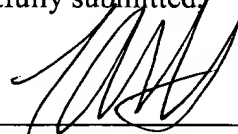
For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that claims 1 and 6 define over the newly disclosed art and thus are still allowable. Favorable consideration is requested.

The remaining claims depend from one of claims 1 and 6, and therefore should also still be allowable. Favorable and independent reconsideration of the dependent claims are requested.

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and issuance of a Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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